Secondary Transition Academy

Employment Training and Supports

Module 2

Employment Planning - Roles and Responsibilities

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Module 2 – Employment Planning

As discussed in Module 1, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) defines transition as a results-oriented process that facilitates a student's movement from school to post-school activities, including employment. One of the primary functions of transition-related planning and instruction, therefore, is to prepare students for post-school employment. Module 2 will provide information about how to help students plan for employment. Part I focuses on employment planning for transition-age student; it describes the stages of employment preparation for students with disabilities and describes ways to determine employment-related goals and objectives. Part II describes the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators working in secondary transition settings. After completing Module 2 you should be able to:

- Describe the stages of employment preparation for students with moderate to severe disabilities in high and post-high school settings.
- Describe why person-centered planning is an important component of transition.
- Describe how to assess the employment needs of students.
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators in job sampling and training sites,
    - Describe how to effectively communicate with members of a team.
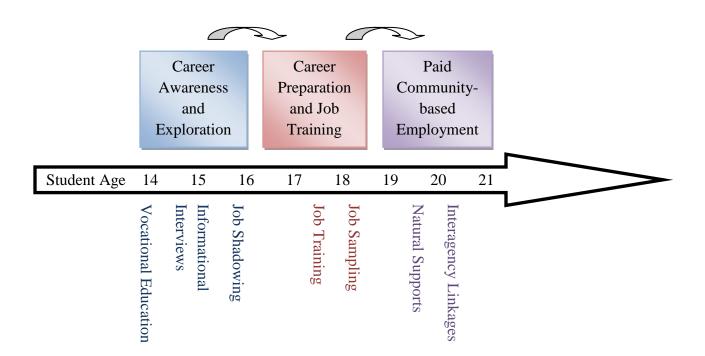   - Describe professional and ethical standards for working in community-based settings.

Contents

Part I: Employment Planning for Secondary Students with Disabilities

Module 1 discussed how the employment rates of people with disabilities have hovered between 20 and 30 percent for the last 10 years. Many students with moderate to severe disabilities are not adequately prepared to enter the workforce when they exit school.   Research strongly suggests that students who successfully adjust to employment following transition have paid employment prior to exiting school (Blackorby and Wagner, 1996). Therefore, it is highly recommended that secondary transition programs structure their programs so students with disabilities develop career awareness, engage in career exploration, and engage in job sampling and training. The ultimate goal of employment planning and training is paid employment prior to exiting school. Figure 2.1 is a timeline for employment preparation in secondary schools. The figure illustrates the type of employment preparation students should be engaged in at different ages.

Figure 2.1. Employment Planning Timeline

Career Awareness and Exploration	Career Preparation and Job Training	Paid Community-based Employment

Student Age   14   15   16   17   18   19   20   21

Vocational Education

Informational Interviews

Job Shadowing

Job Training

Job Sampling

Natural Supports

Interagency Linkages

As illustrated in figure 2.1, students with disabilities should begin the career exploration process as soon as they enter a secondary program. At this time, it is recommended that students enroll in career and technical education courses, conduct informational interviews, and job shadow.

The process will help the student determine his or her career goals. As students begin to build career awareness, they should participate in job sampling and training. These job sites are developed by the certified teacher or transition specialist and under the direction of the teacher the paraeducator provides on-the-job training and support. Currently, there are no empirically validated guidelines about how much time a student should spend engaged in community-based job sampling and training sites. Therefore, decisions about the types of employment training placements and the length of time a student spends in these placements should be individually tailored for each student. It is generally recommended that the older a student gets, the more time he or she should spend in the community working on employment and employment-related skills.

After the student completes the last year of high school, the focus of transition planning and instruction should be centered on paid employment in community-based settings. At this time, supports and strategies should be developed so the student can obtain and maintain paid employment. Specific arrangements should be made with Vocational Rehabilitation and other long-term developmental disability support programs. Representatives from these agencies should be invited to the student's transition planning meeting. In addition, other support and funding options should be explored with the student and his or her parents. These options include Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and the various work incentives associated with each program. In addition, referrals should be made to benefits planners who can help the student and his or her parents understand how working may affect specific benefits.

Fair Labor Standards and Nonpaid Community-based Training

The U.S. Department of Labor developed specific guidelines for designing and implementing community-based work experiences for students with disabilities. These

guidelines were created to ensure that businesses do not take unfair advantage of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. The student's teams should have a good understanding of these guidelines when developing unpaid community-based job sampling sites and should review these guidelines with the paraeducator, student, employer, and parents.   The guidelines should also be reviewed with employers and parents.   Table 2.1 provides a description of the guidelines.

Table 2.1. DOL Guidelines

Section 64c08: Students with Disabilities and Workers with Disabilities Who are Enrolled in Individual Rehabilitation Programs
1. Participants are individuals with physical and/or mental disabilities for whom competitive employment at or above the minimum wage level is not immediately obtainable and who, because of their disability, will need intensive ongoing support to perform in a work setting.
2. Participation is for vocational exploration, assessment or training in a community-based work site under the general supervision of rehabilitation organization personnel, or in the case of a student with a disability, public school personnel.

3. Community-based placements must be clearly defined components of individual rehabilitation programs developed and designed for the benefit of each individual.
     a. Each student with a disability shall have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) which lists the needed transition services established for the exploration, assessment, training, or cooperative vocational education components.
 	
     b. Each participant in a community-based rehabilitation organization program must have an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) which includes a statement of needed transition services established for exploration, assessment, or training components. In the past, these plans were called Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plans (IWRP).

While the existence of an employment relationship will not be determined exclusively on the basis of the number of hours spent in each activity, as a general rule, an employment relationship is presumed not to exist when each of the three components does not exceed the following limitations: • Vocational explorations - 5 hours per job experience   • Vocational assessment - 90 hours per job experience   • Vocational training - 120 hours per job experience   In the case of students, these limitations apply during any one school year.

Prior to implementing community-based employment programs teachers should know in what types of training activity the student is engaged. Specifically, is the student participating in vocational exploration, vocational assessment, or vocational training? Students participating in vocational exploration can spend up to 5 hours per job experience; student participating in vocational assessments can spend 90

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> According to the DOL, the following factors would indicate the business is not complying with the regulations:
>
> - Displacement of regular employees.
> - Vacant positions have been filled with participants rather than regular employees.
> - Regular employees have been relieved of assigned duties.
> - Participants are performing services that, although not ordinarily performed by employees, clearly are of benefit to the business.
> - Participants are under continued and direct supervision of employees of the business rather than representatives of the rehabilitation facility or school.
> - Placements are made to accommodate the labor needs of the business rather than according to the requirements of the individual's IEP or IPE.
> - The IEP or IPE does not specifically limit the time spent by the participant at any one site, or in any clearly distinguishable job classification.
>
> For more information, click here

hours per job experience; and students who participate in job training can spend 120 hours per job experience. It is also important that parents and cooperating employers understand the provisions of these guidelines and how they relate to unpaid community job training experiences. One way to inform parents and employers about nonpaid community-based training is to develop training agreements for each job site. The training agreement will help clarify the roles and responsibility of the school and employer and it will help clarify exactly in what job training activities student should be engaged.

Planning for Employment

Employment planning should be viewed as a process where students are exposed to a variety of employment and employment-related activities. The sooner the planning process begins the more exposure the student will have to the range of jobs available in the community. During this planning process, students should develop the skills and the capacity to make informed decisions about employment and postsecondary education. Unfortunately, many students with disabilities have not learned how to make autonomous decisions and are not

provided the opportunity to make informed choices regarding their post-school goals (Thoma, Rogan, & Baker, 2001; Thoma, Baker, & Saddler, 2002).   A critical component of transition planning, therefore, is to assist students with identifying personal career interests and allowing them to give input regarding transition goals and objectives.

When a student develops the requisite skills and behaviors necessary to make decisions about employment and other post-school goals, the student becomes self-determined.   Self-determination is important because research shows that students with disabilities who exhibit self-determined behaviors are more successful in employment settings (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1998; McGlashing-Johnson, Agran, Sitlington, Cavin, & Wehmeyer, 2003).   As a result, secondary programs must be designed to teach students with disabilities to (1) set goals and solve problems that act as barriers to achieving these goals, (2) make appropriate choices based on personal preferences, (3) advocate for themselves, and (4) self-regulate and manage their day-to-day behavior.   Wehmeyer (2002) recommends a number of strategies to promote self-determination.   Table 2.2 lists these strategies and describes how paraeducators can promote self-determination with students who they support.

Table 2.2. Strategies to Promote Self-Determination

Strategies to Promote Self-Determination of Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities	
Strategy	Paraeducator Behavior
Assess interests and preferences and promote choice making.	Expose and observe student in a variety of community-based employment settings. Provide direct instruction in community-based settings. Listen to the wants and needs of students.
Encourage students to participate in educational planning.	Participate in person-centered planning meetings. Assist the student with researching employment options by conducting situational assessments, job tours, and job shadowing.
Encourage problem solving and decision making.	Help the student identify positive and negative consequences for actions. Explain and explore each consequence in terms the student understands.
Facilitate student directed learning.	Develop strategies so the student can self-regulate. These include developing student check-off list, written and/or picture schedules. Have the student evaluate his/her performance while job training.

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Self-Determination

What are some ways you can help a student become more self-determined?

Response:

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The strategies listed above will be most effective if they are used during real-life experiences. In a job training context, it is recommended that students be (1) instructed to recognize their strengths and weakness, (2) instructed to establish goals based on this information, (3) instructed to recognize different sources of support, and (4) instructed to self-monitor progress toward meeting employment goals and objectives. Because paraeducators closely interact with students in a variety of community settings, they play an important role in self-determination.

Person-Centered Planning

Person-centered planning is one strategy that teachers use to determine the individual needs and preferences of students with disabilities (Inge, Sherron-Targett, & Amrstrong, 2007). A major component of the person-centered planning is to encourage students to become active participants in the employment process. The plan is designed to help a student obtain realistic goals, such as inclusive employment, inclusive community participation, and the identification of living preferences. One of the key components of a person-centered plan is the student invites who he or she would like to be on the planning team. Generally, these individuals include family members, co-workers, and support personnel.
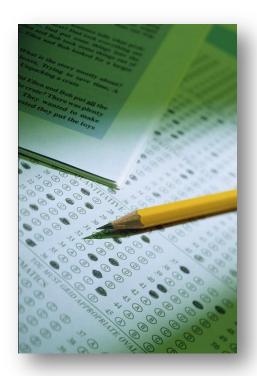
Kregel (1998) recommends that the following components be included when using person-centered planning in an employment planning context. First, the person-centered plan should be strength based and focus on individual preferences rather limitations. Second, planning should focus on developing a vision of the type of job and work environment that meets the student's needs and preferences. Third, the student and team should develop short and long-term employment goals. Finally, the team should coordinate and establish network of formal and

informal supports that can be used to maintain employment. Because paraeudcators typically provide job support to students with disabilities, they should be invited to attend a person-centered planning meeting.

Employment Assessments

Special educators use a wide range of assessments to determine a student's academic and functional skills. In fact, IDEA requires that special educators use age-appropriate transition assessments to establish post-school goals for the student. Polychronis and McDonnell (2010) recommend that specific assessments for transition-aged students be (1) valid for the student's disability and functioning level, (2) be linked to the student's current and projected post-school environments, (3) focus on the student's strengths, and (4) support a person-centered approach to transition planning.   Special educators use a wide range of formal and informal assessments to aid the transition process (see NSTTAC Transition Assessment Toolkit).

Formal assessments include academic achievement tests, intellectual functioning assessment, adaptive behavior scales, vocational scales, and interest inventories. These assessments report that they have reliability and validity data in measuring or assessing specific student traits. Because formal assessments are based on standards or norms they do not work well with students with moderate to severe disabilities. That is, formal assessment lacks predictive validity for students with more moderate to severe disabilities in that the assessments do not accurately predict who will be successful on the job. Formal assessments have also been criticized because they are not linked to specific career opportunities and do not capture the often dynamic nature of work settings.

Because formalized assessments are not always appropriate for students with more significant support needs, it is generally recommended the informal, functional assessments be utilized.   Informal assessments include interviews, observations, ecological, inventories, situational assessments, and behavioral observations. These assessments are not standardized and do no attempt to demonstrate validity or reliability of measures. These assessments are used

to determine the student's employment interests and preferences, indentify the supports needed to be successful in employment and community settings, identify alternative performance strategies that can be utilized to ensure success, and to identify extended support options.

Vocational Profiles

One promising approach used to determine the employment preferences and interests of individuals with disabilities is to develop an employment profile (Callahan & Condon, 2007; See [Rural Institute Transition Project](#)). Creating a vocational profile is a process that involves discussing employment with the student, family, and other members of a team. It is not used to predict whether the student can work, but rather it is used to help students with disabilities, their families, and others identify concrete ways to assist student with achieving their employment goals.   This profile may include information such as the individual's background or relevant history, preferences and interests, present levels of performance, vocational skills and abilities, and needed supports and accommodations. The profile, subsequently, becomes a starting point for the employment planning process.

Job Tours

Job tours are another prevocational assessment activity that is beneficial to students. Job touring allows the students to gain exposure to various jobs and industries before beginning actual training at the worksite. These tours can help students answer questions about the types of jobs they are interested in and help delineate job interests without wasting excessive amounts of time in worksites that are not a proper fit. For example, a student may not be able to identify their specific preferences for a job. Job tours could provide opportunities to narrow the focus by observing workers immersed in a variety of unrelated fields such as office work, landscaping, customer service, retail, etc. For students who have already identified a preference for a specific type of job, touring could be used to present ideas how that specific job preference can translate into multiple employment opportunities. For example, if a student has indicated that they would enjoy working with animals, job tours may include a veterinarian's office, an animal shelter, and a retail store that supplies pet products.

Job Shadowing

Once a few distinct vocational preferences and interests have been identified, it is often beneficial for students to see what the actual requirements of the job include. Job shadowing allows the students to follow along and watch workers immersed in the demands of their jobs.

The length of this arrangement may be a day, a week, or even longer, but should be determined prior to beginning the shadowing experience so that the student will receive maximum benefit.

Situational Assessments

In order to gather more information about a student's employment skills, needs, and abilities, it may be necessary to conduct multiple community-based assessments in a variety of environments. A situational assessment is a systematic observation that can be used to collect data on students' interests, abilities, social/interpersonal skills, and accommodations/needs in employment sites. Additionally, the demands of the environment can be varied while recording behaviors such as interest, actual skill level, use of materials, and social interactions. Situational assessments can be a valid and reliable source of data if the sites are systematically developed (e.g., uniform tasks a student will do, amount of time, supervision responsibilities). The data collected can then be used in planning decisions concerning further situational assessment sites and accommodations needed in specific situations (see situational assessment form).

Part II: Paraeducator Roles and Responsibilities

School-based employment training programs require a great deal of coordination and collaboration to effectively operate. In these programs, certified teachers are responsible for the design, implementation, assessment, and evaluation of students and their employment-related instructional program(s). Basically, the teacher's role is to coordinate a variety of services and supports for the student in both classroom and community settings. The paraeducator's role is to provide direct support to students in school and community-based settings as outlined by the certified teacher. This means that paraeducators will spend time away from the school providing instruction and support to students. Because of the relative independence paraeducators have in the community, it is critical that they adhere to a high set of standards and that they work closely with the team to ensure that the student is receiving appropriate instruction and support. The remaining sections will explore the specific roles and responsibilities of paraeducators in transition settings.

Effective Communication

The success of students with disabilities in a transition setting is contingent on many factors; one of these factors is how well the team can effectively communicate and interact. Consequently, teams should establish communication practices that improve planning and coordinating goals and objectives outlined in a student's transition plan. The [Council for Exceptional Children](#) (2000) developed a list of knowledge and skill competencies related to communication and collaboration in school settings. These competencies are listed in the adjacent text box. The important components of these competencies require the paraeducator to (1) communicate and convey to the team the progress the student is making, (2) communicate and convey pertinent information gathered from employers, and (3) effectively communicate with the student.

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> **CEC Competencies**
>
> *Knowledge:*
>
> (1) Characteristics of effective communication with children, youth, families, and school and community personnel.
>
> (2) Common concerns of parents of individuals with exceptionalities.
>
> *Skills:*
>
> (1) Under the direction of a certified/licensed professional, use constructive strategies in working with individuals with exceptional learning needs, parents, and school and community personnel in various learning environments.
>
> (2) Follow the instruction of the professional.
>
> (3) Foster respectful and beneficial relationships between family and other community personnel.
>
> (4) Participate as requested in conferences with family members or primary caregivers as members of the educational team.
>
> *Source: Council for Exceptional Children, (2000).*

Communication Styles

All of us have different communication styles. It is important to understanding these styles so that we can become more aware of how personal communication styles affect how we communicate with colleagues and how they reciprocate the communication. There are three basic communication styles: *aggressive*, *passive,* and *assertive*. People who are aggressive communicators typically work off the assumption that they are always right. They also tend to be close minded, poor listeners; they interrupt and have a hard time seeing other people's point of view. When aggressive communicators engage in dialogue they often patronize the receiver

> ✎
> **Communication Styles**
>
> Make a list of three people with whom you regularly communicate. What are their communication styles? What are some ways that you can more effectively communicate with the people you indentified?
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and they can been seen as condescending and sarcastic. Aggressive communicators approach problem solving from a must win/loose paradigm and often use personal attacks. Passive communicators are indirect communicators who do not want confrontation. They are hesitant to speak up and usually agree externally while disagreeing internally. Passive communicators approach problem solving by avoiding uncomfortable situations or conflicts, asking for advice and supervision. Assertive communicators are active listeners and they encourage the contributions of others. Assertive communicators approach problem solving by confronting problems as they occur and they negotiate and compromise. You will encounter each of these communication styles in both your work and personal life. You must be aware of your style and the styles of others so that you can foster more positive and productive interactions.

Verbal Communication

Effective communication is not automatic; it takes practice and commitment to learn to communicate well.   Because all of us have different strategies for communicating, we will inevitably come across a situation where individual communication styles clash and we are less effective at communicating with each other. The more you understand the traits of good communication, the better you will be able to communicate with members of a team. Effective communication requires the following components: active listening, body language, affirmation and communication are all components of effective communication.

Active listening.
Effective communicators are good listeners! In order to effectively communicate you must listen to the message that the other person is conveying. Active listening is particularly important when you have to deal with complex or stressful situations. Active listening requires that you do not take potential concerns or comments personally and that you remain objective. Active listing is particularly important in community-based employment programs because most employers have little experience working or hiring students with disabilities. Because you serve as a liaison between the job site and the school, you need to listen to the concerns, restate and validate the concern, and address the concern openly and honestly. You also need to convey this information to the certified teacher.

Body language.
Research indicates that

Communication

You are training a student (John) at Target. A recently hired supervisor, who is unfamiliar with student, asks you and John to pick-up all of the trash in front of the store because the paid employee who regularly picks the trash up is sick. You explain to him that John is a student who is participating in non-paid job training and is learning how to assemble bikes. The supervisor becomes irritated and tells you that he does not care what John is learning; he continues to say that because John is a paid employee of Target he needs to pick up the trash.   What is the communication style of the supervisor? How would you respond using active listening, affirmation, and reframing?
Response:

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approximately 60-70 percent of communication is expressed through body language. Therefore, you can learn a lot by a person's body language and they can learn a lot from your body language. When communicating and interacting with students, family members, employers, and team members be aware of your body language. Do you maintain eye-contact with the employer, how is your posture, are your hand gestures threatening, do you seem excited about supported employment or are you withdrawn?

       Affirmation and Reframing. Good communicators affirm statements that are made by the person with whom they are communicating. Affirmation is accomplished by restating the concern and asking the person if that is the correct concern. Good communicators also address each concern openly and honestly and respond to the concern in a non-threatening way. It is also important to reframe questions or concerns to build rapport, clarify statements, and facilitate understanding. Essentially, the goals of reframing are to make sure that the other party knows that you understand the message and to make sure that both parties hear each other. For example, "What I hear you saying is you are frustrated with the way John claps his hands while job training. Is that correct?"

Communication with Students

       Just as it is important to develop effective communication styles when working with your team and other community members, it is also important to maintain professionalism when interacting with a student with disabilities. The ways in which you communicate with the student is particularly important in community-based settings because others will model how you interact and communicate with the student. Effective and appropriate communication with students requires that you:

1. *Use age-appropriate language*. Speak to the student based on his or her chronological age not his or her developmental age.
2. *Do not use derogatory remarks or comments when interacting with the student*. Avoid comments that will promote stereotypes of disabilities.
3. *Speak to the student*. Do not speak about the student when he/she is present. Direct question to the student. This is especially important in employment settings because employers will often ask you questions about the student when the student is present.
4. *Maintain professionalism when speaking and interacting with the student.* When working with students in school and community-based settings it is important that you maintain

professionalism. Do not patronize the student, speak slowly, or loud to student. Speak and treat the student then same way you expect to be treated.

Communication with Certified Teacher

Paraeducators working in community-based transition programs have a great deal of autonomy and often work with little direct supervision while in community settings. Therefore, it is important that lines of communication be established with the teacher. To avoid communication breakdowns, it is recommended that steps should be taken to document (1) what job training activities were completed, (2) what types of problems where encountered during the training, (3) what types of comments or concerns the employer has, and (4) the types of data collected during training. This information should be conveyed to the teacher so that adjustments to the employment plan can be made. An effective way to establish lines of communication is to use a community-based job training log for each student (figure 2.2). This log should be completed after each community-based job training activity. Immediate concerns should be brought to the teacher's attention and specific strategies, intervention, or solutions should be developed.

Figure 2.2. Example Job-Training Log

Community-Based Job-Training Log				
Student:		Business:		
Date	Data Collection	Time Job Training	Employer Concerns	Student Concerns
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			

Professionalism and Ethics at Community-Based Jobs

　　　　Paraeducators working in community-based employment programs must adhere to and uphold professional standards and ethics. Maintaining professionalism and ethics is important because of the unique and personal services educators provide students with disabilities. It is also important because paraeducators are often the interface between the school and the community. That is, the way paraeducators act in community-based settings is a reflection of the school.   The Council for Exceptional Children (2000) developed a list of knowledge and skill competencies related to professionalism and ethical practices. Table 2.3 lists each of the skills and describes how these skills are needed in the context of community-based employment training.

Table 2.3. Professional Practices in Job-Training Settings

Knowledge and Skill Competencies Related to Professionalism and Ethical Practices	
Skill	**Responsibility in Community-based Job Training Settings**
Demonstrate commitment to assisting learners in achieving their highest potential.	Be prepared to provide direct instruction and support to the student so that he or she may achieve employment-related goals and objectives.
The paraeducator is a role model for individuals with exceptional learning needs.	Model appropriate social skills and workplace behaviors. This includes using appropriate language, proper dress and hygiene, and not texting or taking non-school-related calls on cell phones.
Function in a manner that demonstrates a positive regard for the distinctions among roles and responsibilities of paraeducators, professionals, and other support personnel.	Understand the roles and responsibilities of employers, teachers, and students in job-training sites. Clarify these roles and responsibilities with certified teacher.
Function in a manner that demonstrates the ability to separate personal issues from one's responsibilities as a paraeducator.	Take steps to limit personal distractions (i.e., personal phone calls, visits from friends, running personal errands) while at community-based jobs.
Demonstrate respect for culture, religion, gender, and sexual orientation or individual students.	Be aware of cultural, gender, and religious difference that may impact where a student works and the ways in which the student interacts with others.
Promote and maintain a high level of competence and integrity.	Establish lines of communication with certified teacher to ensure that proper instruction, support, and data collection are occurring at the job-training site.
Exercise objective and prudent judgment.	Be prepared for the unexpected at community-based job-training sites. Develop and review emergency and contingency plans with the certified teacher.
Accept constructive feedback.	Practice good communication skills with the employer, teacher, student, and other community members.

The underlying assumption of these competencies is that paraeducators play an important role in community-based employment programs. Without paraeducator support, these programs would not be able to meet the individual needs of students. As such, paraeducators should not underestimate the importance of their jobs and they should (1) come to work prepared to deliver instruction and support to students, (2) be role models for students, other teachers, and community members, and (3) constructively and objectively communicate with members of the team about issues or concerns that may be encountered .

Summary

Employment planning for student with disabilities can be a difficult and time-consuming process. The process should be person-centered and geared toward discovering the individual needs of the student with disabilities. Employment planning and instruction should begin at an early age and should follow a logical progression that reflects the student's chronological age. That is, as the student gets closer to exiting school, the more community-based instruction he or she should receive. Because instruction is provided in community-based settings, paraeducators should have clearly defined roles and should adhere to competencies related to professional communication and conduct.

Key Terms

Active Listening — Active listening requires that you do not take potential concerns or comments personally and that you remain objective.

Affirmation — Restating the concern and asking the person if that is the correct concern.

Formal assessment — Assessments that use standardized scores include academic achievement tests, intellectual functioning assessment, adaptive behavior scales, vocational scales, and interest inventories.

Informal assessment — Informal assessments include interviews, observations, ecological, inventories, situational assessments, and behavioral observations.

Job shadowing — Job shadowing allows the students to follow along and watch workers immersed in the demands of their jobs.

Job tours — Job touring allows the students to gain exposure to various jobs and industries before beginning actual training at the worksite.

Person-centered planning — A strategy that teachers use to determine the individual needs and preferences of the students.

Self-determination — Develops the skills and behaviors to make decisions about employment and other post-school goals.

Situational assessment — A systematic observation that can be used to collect data on students' interests, abilities, social/interpersonal skills, and accommodations/needs in employment sites.

Vocational profile — A process that involves discussing employment with the student, family, and other members of a team.

Test Review

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True or False

True   False   Vocation profiles are primarily used as a diagnostic vocational tool.

True   False   Students who participate in school-based employment programs only have similar outcomes to students who participate in community-based programs.

True   False   Students who exhibit self-determination skills have improved post-school outcomes.

True   False   The Department of Labor allows businesses to move a paid employee to another position so that a student can train at the business.

True   False   Situational assessments are only used with students who do not want to work.

True   False   Formal assessment can usually predict where a student with disabilities would like to work.

True   False   Person-centered planning is always strength based.

True   False   In order to participate in non-paid community-based job training, students must be over 18.

Multiple Choice

According to the Department of Labor a student can participate in ___ hours of vocational exploration.

        a. 5 hours per job experience
        b. 8 hours per job experience
        c. 10 hours per job experience
        d. 15 hours per job experience

What type of a communicator believes that he or she is always right?

        a. Aggressive
        b. Passive
        c. Assertive
        d. Indifferent

According to the Department of Labor a student can participate in ___ hours of vocational assessment.

       a. 120 per experience
       b. 20 per experience
       c. 50 per experience
       d. 5 per experience

A person who agrees externally but disagrees internally is what type of communicator?

       a. Aggressive
       b. Passive
       c. Assertive
       d. Reflective

Which is not an example of a formal assessment?
       a. Vocation profile
       b. Standardized test
       c. Interest inventory
       d. Adaptive behavior scale

A person who approaches problem solving by confronting problems as they occur is what type of communicator?

       a. Aggressive
       b. Assertive
       c. Benign
       d. Engaged

According to the Department of Labor a student can participate in ___ hours of vocational training.
       a. 80 per experience
       b. 60 per experience
       c. 120 per experience
       d. 90 per experience

Reflection Box Feedback

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Box 1: What are some ways you can help a student become more self-determined?

Feedback:

There are many ways that you can promote self-determination with students that you support. First, you can assist the student with tasks rather than completing them for him/her. Second, you can clarify expectations and consequences in terms that the student understands. Finally, you can respect the individual choices students make.

Box 2: Make a list of 3 people with whom you regularly communicate. What are their communication styles? What are some ways that you can more effectively communicate with the people you indentified?

Feedback:

We all have our own communication styles and we probably all use aggressive, passive, and assertive communication styles in different situations. In order to become more effective communicators, you should be able to identify the style of communication you and others are using. When we become aware of the ways in which others communicate with us and in which we respond, we can take steps to improve the interaction.

Box 3: You are training a student (John) at Target. A recently hired supervisor, who is unfamiliar with student, asks you and John to pick up all of the trash in front of the store because the paid employee who regularly picks the trash up is sick. You explain to him that John is a student who is participating in non-paid job training and is learning how to assemble bikes. The supervisor becomes irritated and tells you that he does not care what John is learning; he continues to say that because John is a paid employee of Target he needs to pick up the trash. What is the communication style of the supervisor? How would you respond using active listening, affirmation, and reframing?

Feedback:

This is a classic example of an aggressive communicator. The supervisor is working off the assumption that he is right and you are wrong.   The supervisor clearly believes that John is a paid employee and feels that he should do what he is told. The best way to handle this situation is to remain calm and respond be saying "I understand that you want John to pick up the trash because you believe that he is getting paid to work at Target. He is actually a student from Valley High School and he participating in an unpaid job training program. Let me explain how our program works……….."

Resources

National Center of Secondary Education and Transition. http://www.ncset.org

Beach Center on Disability. http://www.beachcenter.org/education_and_training/self-determination.aspx

The Center for Self-determination. http://www.centerforself-determination.com/

Self Detemination assessment tools. Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment. http://www.ou.edu/content/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/self-determination-assessment-tools.html

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Appendix

Community-Based Job Training Log				
Student:		**Business:**		
Date	Data Collection	Time Job Training	Employer Concerns	Student Concerns
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			
	Yes ☐ No ☐ *Comments/Concerns:*			

Unpaid Community-Based Job Sampling Guidelines

Community-based job sampling involves placing students in a variety of unpaid work experiences in local businesses. These experiences help students identify vocational interest and sample the range of employment options in their community. In an effort to help schools comply with the Fair Labor Standards, the U.S. Department of Labor has developed specific guidelines for designing and implementing community-based work experiences.

Section 64c08: Students with Disabilities and Workers with Disabilities Who are Enrolled in Individual Rehabilitation Programs

The U. S. Department of Labor and community-based rehabilitation organizations are committed to the continued development and implementation of individual vocational rehabilitation programs that will facilitate the transition of persons with disabilities into employment within their communities. This transition must take place under conditions that will not jeopardize the protections afforded by the Fair Labor Standards Act to program participants, employees, employers, or other programs providing rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities.

In an effort to promote vocational training for workers with disabilities, WH (wage and hour division) will not assert an employment relationship between the worker with a disability, the rehabilitation facility or school, and/or the business where the worker has been placed when all of the seven following criteria are met (note: the criteria are the same for both students and nonstudents enrolled in vocational rehabilitation programs):

4. Participants are individuals with physical and/or mental disabilities for whom competitive employment at or above the minimum wage level is not immediately obtainable and who, because of their disability, will need intensive ongoing support to perform in a work setting.
5. Participation is for vocational exploration, assessment or training in a community-based work site under the general supervision of rehabilitation organization personnel, or in the case of a student with a disability, public school personnel.
6. Community-based placements must be clearly defined components of individual rehabilitation programs developed and designed for the benefit of each individual.
   a) Each student with a disability shall have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) which lists the needed transition services established for the exploration, assessment, training, or cooperative vocational education components.
   b) Each participant in a community-based rehabilitation organization program must have an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) which includes a statement of needed transition services established for exploration, assessment, or training components. In the past these plans were called Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plans (IWRP).

The activities of the individuals with disabilities (participants) at the community-based placement site do not result in an immediate advantage to the business. Factors that would indicate the business is advantaged by activities of the individual include:

- Displacement of regular employees.
- Vacant positions have been filled with participants rather than regular employees.
- Regular employees have been relieved of assigned duties.
- Participants are performing services that, although not ordinarily performed by employees, clearly

are of benefit to the business.
- Participants are under continued and direct supervision of employees of the business rather than representatives of the rehabilitation facility or school.
- Placements are made to accommodate the labor needs of the business rather than according to the requirements of the individual's IEP or IPE.
- The IEP or IPE does not specifically limit the time spent by the participant at any one site, or in any clearly distinguishable job classification.

While the existence of an employment relationship will not be determined exclusively on the basis of the number of hours spent in each activity, as a general rule, an employment relationship is presumed not to exist when each of the three components does not exceed the following limitations:

- Vocational explorations - 5 hours per job experienced
- Vocational assessment - 90 hours per job experienced
- Vocational training - 120 hours per job experience

In the case of students, these limitations apply during any one school year.

Based on these guidelines, if no is checked on any of the indicators below, then an employee – employer relationship exists and the student should be paid commensurate wages.

Yes ☐   No ☐   The community-based placement is documented and is clearly identified on the student's IEP. The IEP must include a statement of needed transition services established for vocational exploration, assessment, and training.

Yes ☐   No ☐   Students in the job sampling program are youth with physical and/or mental disabilities for whom competitive employment is not immediately available and who, because of their disability, will require intensive ongoing support to perform in a work setting.

Yes ☐   No ☐   Participation in job sampling is for vocational exploration, assessment, or job training and is under the supervision of public school representative.

Yes ☐   No ☐   The activities of the students in the community-based placement sites should not result in an immediate advantage to the business.

Yes ☐   No ☐   The total hours of the experience shall not exceed:

> *Vocational exploration* (job shadowing, job site evaluation) – 5 hours per job site.
> *Vocational Assessment* (Situational) – 90 hours per job experience
> *Vocational Training* (job skills training, job coaching) – 120 hours per job experience.

Yes ☐   No ☐   Both the student and parent have been fully informed of the IEP and the community-based placement and understand that participation in a job sampling program does not entitle the student to wages.

Yes ☐   No ☐   Students are not entitled to employment at the business at the conclusion of the experience.

Form 2. Sample Non-Paid, Community-based Job Training Agreement

Non-Paid, Community-Based Job Training Agreement

Student's Name: _____
                    First   *Middle*   *Last*

Date of Birth: _____

School: _____
                    Address   *City*   *ZIP*

School Telephone: _____

Teacher/Coordinator: _____
                    Name   *Email*   *Phone*

Business: _____
                    Address   *City*   *ZIP*

Contact: _____
                    Position   *Email*   *Phone*

The student listed above will be participating in the following community-based activities as outlined in his/her Individual Education Plan:

                                Provide brief description and attach plan for each experience.

☐ Career Exploration   _____

☐ Career Assessment   _____

☐ Work-related Training   _____

By signing this agreement, all parties agree to the following terms:

1. The employer derives no benefit from the training activities of the student.
2. The student does not displace a regular employee and is closely supervised.
3. The student is not entitled to receive any wages during the training agreement time.
4. The student is not entitled to a job at the end of the training experience.

_____   _____
Parent(s) or Guardian(s)   *Date*

_____   _____
Student   *Date*

_____   _____
School Representative   *Date*

_____   _____
Worksite representative   *Data*

Vocational Profile Form

Date:

Persons Attending Meeting:

Name: _____
First   Middle   Last

Address: _____
Street   City   State   ZIP

Contact: _____
Home Phone   Cell Phone   Email

Benefit Information

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- ☐ Receives: Monthly amount_____
- ☐ Application completed, awaiting determination.
- ☐ Have not completed/started application.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- ☐ Receives: Monthly amount_____
- ☐ Application completed, awaiting determination.
- ☐ Have not completed/started application.

Other Check all that apply
- ☐ EPAS
- ☐ Student Earned Income Exclusion
- ☐ Impairment Related Work Expense
- ☐ Plan to Achieve Self-Support

Have you met with a benefits planner?   Yes ☐   No ☐
If yes, provide date and contact information_____
If no, would you like to complete a referral form and meet with a planner? _____

Have you met with Vocational Rehabilitation? Yes ☐   No ☐
Name and Contact information:_____

Residential Support
List names and relationship of individuals living in the same residence.

Name   *Relationship*   *Assist with Transportation*

Name   *Relationship*   *Assist with Transportation*

Name	*Relationship*	*Assist with Transportation*
Name	*Relationship*	*Assist with Transportation*

Other Supports
List names of individuals who can provide support.

Name	*Relationship*	*Contact*
Name	*Relationship*	*Contact*
Name	*Relationship*	*Contact*
Name	*Relationship*	*Contact*

Work Planning

List Ideal Working Conditions.
Check all that apply and provide any helpful information

☐ Sedentary

☐ Mild Physical Labor (some lifting, walking, bending, etc.)

☐ Physical Labor (lifting, standing for long periods, manual labor)

☐ Indoor

☐ Outdoor

☐ Repetitive and Structured Routines

☐ Unstructured Routines

Work Days:	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Work Time:

What types of work do you want to do? Describe why.

Are there any businesses near home that offer the types of work described above? List below.

Business	Address	Contact

Are there any businesses that can be accessed using available transportation? List business and transportation options below.

Business	Address	Transportation

Supports & Accommodations

Instructional Strategies Provide a description for each.	Attention to task performance ☐ I need frequent prompting and high supervision. ☐ I need low prompting and supervision.
	How does student handle criticism and stress? ☐ Resistive ☐ Refusal to Work ☐ Accepts ☐ Other
	Rate student lifting ability ☐ Poor (<10lbs) ☐ Fair (10-20lbs) ☐ Good (30-40 lbs) ☐ Great

	How long can student work without a break?
	Does student make smooth transitions from one task to another?
	Can student adapt to changes in job routines?
	Are there things that need to be avoided in the workplace?

	Can/will the student ask for help when needed?

Job Seeking Skills

Check all that apply and describe supports needed	☐ Student can describe own job interests and skills.
	☐ Student initiates job exploration and job seeking tasks.
	☐ Student can describe past work experience(s).
	☐ Student can ask for information about a specific job.

Job Sampling and Training Experience(s)

Describe the job sampling and training experiences. Include business name, contact information and any functional/situational assessments.	Business	Contact	Functional/Situational Work Assessments

Actions

Name and Contact of Business Contacted	

Goals

	2 Weeks
List Priorities and	

Goals	
	1 Month
	3 Months

Adapted from Marc Gold and Associates (2001). Vocational Profile Form.